Amendments to the Claims

1. (Previously presented) A carton for accommodating a plurality of containers, the carton being of a tubular structure and comprising top and base spaced opposed panels, the top panel including inner and outer overlapping panel portions, and a retaining structure depending from the inner panel portion of the top panel, the retaining structure comprising an engagement panel with an engaging edge to engage a container, wherein the retaining structure is provided with at least one opening each for receiving part of a container, the engaging edge being provided by an edge of the at least one opening, the retaining structure being disposed in the tubular structure such that the at least one opening as a whole is disposed directly below the outer panel portion.

2. (Original) The carton according to claim 1 wherein the base panel has apertures each defined for receiving a container, and the base panel is provided with at least one foldable retaining tab hingedly connected thereto for operatively engaging part of a container.

3. (Original) The carton according to claim 2 wherein the engaging edge is arranged to press the at least one retaining tab against a container to retain the at least one retaining tab in engagement with a container.

4. (Original) The carton according to claim 2 wherein each of the apertures is defined by a pair of the retaining tabs struck from the base panel, the retaining tabs of each pair being disposed in substantially opposed positions.

5. (Original) The carton according to claim 2 wherein the at least one retaining tab has a notch for receiving the engaging edge of the engagement panel to allow the engaging edge to reach a radially protruding part of a container.

6. (Original) The carton according to claim 1 wherein the engagement panel has an engaging tab projecting into the each opening and wherein the engaging tab comprises the engaging edge.

7. (Previously presented) The carton according to claim 1 wherein the engagement panel is spaced above the base panel.

8. (Previously presented) The carton according to claim 16 wherein the engagement panel is disposed between a first container and a second adjacent container to have opposed side edges thereof engaged with the first and second containers respectively, one of said opposed side edges being defined in part by said engaging edge.

9. (Previously presented) The carton as claimed in claim 1 wherein the retaining structure further comprises a connector panel extending downward from a free edge of the inner panel portion and hingedly connected at a lower edge of the connector panel to the engagement panel.

10. (Previously presented) A package comprising a carton of a tubular structure and a necked article contained in the carton, the carton comprising a top panel including inner and outer overlapping panel portions disposed in substantially the same plane, and a retaining structure depending from the inner panel portion to engage an underside of a radially protruding part of the necked article, the retaining structure has an opening for receiving a portion of the radially protruding part of the article, and a lower edge of the opening comprises an engaging edge for engaging the underside of the radially protruding part, the retaining structure being disposed in the tubular structure such that the opening is disposed directly below the outer panel portion.

11. (Original) The package as claimed in claim 10 wherein the retaining structure includes a connector panel hingedly connected to and extending downwardly from a free edge of the inner panel portion and an engagement panel hingedly connected to a lower edge of the connector panel, and the opening is formed at least in part in the connector panel.

12. (Original) The package as claimed in claim 11 wherein the engagement panel has an engaging tab projecting into the opening, and wherein the engaging tab comprises the engaging edge.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously presented) A package comprising a top-gripping carton and a plurality of articles arranged in at least two rows and engaged by the carton, the carton comprising a top panel including a pair of inner and outer lap panel portions, and a retaining structure depending from the inner panel portion, wherein the retaining structure comprises a spacer strip disposed between two adjacent ones of the rows of the articles, the strip having one side edge for engagement with the articles in one of the adjacent rows and the other side edge for engagement with the articles in the other of the adjacent rows, wherein the retaining structure further comprises a connector panel extending downwardly from a free edge of the inner lap panel portion, the connector panel being hingedly connected at a lower edge thereof to the one side edge of the spacer strip.

15. (Currently amended) A unitary blank for forming a carton, comprising a plurality of panels connected together in series to form a tubular structure including a base panel having a plurality of apertures each defined in part by a foldable retaining tab hingedly connected to the ~~first~~ base panel to be folded out of a general plane of the ~~first~~ base panel, an inner top panel portion spaced from the base panel by a first side panel, a retaining structure connected to the inner panel portion, an outer top panel portion connected to the base panel by a second side panel to be secured directly to the inner top panel portion when the carton is formed, the retaining

structure having an opening for receiving at least a portion of a radially protruding part of an article in a set up condition, and a lower edge of the opening comprises an engaging edge for engaging an underside of the radially protruding part, the outer top panel portion defining one of ~~the~~ opposed ends of the blank.

16. (Previously presented) The carton according to claim 1 wherein the engagement panel is spaced below the outer panel portion.

17. (Previously presented) The carton as claimed in claim 1 wherein the inner and outer panel portions are disposed in substantially the same plane.

18. (Previously presented) The carton as claimed in claim 9 wherein a free edge of the outer panel portion is disposed on the inner panel portion such that the free edges of the inner and outer panel portions lie in substantially the same plane.

19. (Previously presented) A carton for accommodating a plurality of containers, the carton being of a tubular structure and comprising top and base spaced opposed panels, the top panel including inner and outer overlapping panel portions, and a retaining structure disposed inside the tubular structure, the retaining structure comprising a connector panel extending downward from the inner panel portion and an engagement panel hingedly connected to a lower edge of the connector panel, the engagement panel having opposed side edges and being spaced below the outer panel portion, the engagement panel being disposed between a first container and a second adjacent container to have the opposed side edges thereof engaged with the first and second containers respectively.

20. (Previously presented) The carton as claimed in claim 19 wherein the retaining structure is provided with an opening for receiving part of the first container, one of the opposed side edges of the engagement panel being defined in part by an edge of the opening of the retaining structure.

21. (Previously presented) The carton as claimed in claim 20 wherein the connector panel is hingedly connected to a free edge of the inner panel portion, said one of the opposed side edges of the engagement panel is hingedly connected to the lower edge of the connector panel, and a free edge of the outer panel portion being disposed on the inner panel portion such that the free edges of the inner and outer panel portions lie in substantially the same plane.